

## Transportation Committee Testimony- Margaret O'Brien, 61st District

Thank you Chairman Opsommer and committee members for taking up house bills 4366 and 4367. As stated before, I am Margaret O'Brien and I represent a portion of Kalamazoo County. With me is Representative Sean McCann, who also represents a portion of Kalamazoo County including the City of Kalamazoo. We are also joined by Linda Teeter, Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority; Deb Bucholtz, Chairman of the Kalamazoo County Commission; and \_\_\_\_\_

The bills before you pertain only to the county of Kalamazoo. Kalamazoo County currently has two different transportation millages- the first is a county millage for linehaul and demand services that is run by the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority. The second millage is for linehaul services in the City Kalamazoo and is run by the City of Kalamazoo. There is widespread community support for the two millages and authorities to be run by one body- Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority.

There is community consensus that the city of Kalamazoo needs and supports increased linehaul services, which the rest of the county does not need. Kalamazoo County desires an efficient and effective transportation authority that can maximize community dollars. Current state law does not allow for a differential millage- meaning one millage with different rates for various townships or cities. But Kalamazoo County recognizes that the City of Kalamazoo has higher demand for services that would not benefit the rest of the community. Thus, we have sought a compromise that reflects the unique desires of Kalamazoo County.

This package of bills would do two things-

1. It would allow Kalamazoo County to have two Transportation Authorities. The first authority would continue with the countywide millage and provide linehaul and demand services. The second authority would take effect when the city of Kalamazoo's current transportation millage expires. It is anticipated that this second authority would take over the same service area as currently provided by the city of Kalamazoo. But, it would have the option to expand the service area to other nearby urbanized areas if the voters desired more intense linehaul services.

2. The package would allow the two authorities to share members for coordination purposes. The two authorities could be identical in membership or differ slightly depending on the desire of the community. Current state law addresses incompatible offices, and this would remove the authority from this definition.

Finally, again, these bills only pertain to Kalamazoo County. Community leaders did outreach to like partners throughout the state and there was not another community who this structure would fit. We believe this legislation coincides with Governor Snyder's efforts of shared services and maximizing taxpayer dollars in a fiscally responsible way.